DIBELS® AD School Administrator Handout

What Is *DIBELS AD*?

DIBELS AD (*DIBELS* for Accountability Decisions) is used in conjunction with *DIBELS Next* to provide one indicator of student growth within a comprehensive teacher evaluation and accountability program. For *DIBELS AD*, standard *DIBELS Next* benchmark testing is conducted at the beginning and middle of the school year. For the end of the year benchmark assessment, *DIBELS AD* testing forms are used instead of the *DIBELS Next* forms. *DIBELS AD* test forms are parallel test forms equated to the *DIBELS Next* end-of-year benchmark forms.

DIBELS AD is a secure, research-validated reading assessment that cannot be accessed by students or teachers beforehand, and which is administered by trained personnel other than the student's teacher. Scores on the *DIBELS AD* assessment are used to measure each student's individual reading progress over the course of the year, and to determine how their performance compares with that of other students who began the year at a similar level.

Key Implementation Procedures for Administrators

A school-level administrator typically will be in charge of *DIBELS AD* implementation. However, administrators may designate other key personnel (e.g., assessment coordinator) to manage some of the following implementation responsibilities:

1. Discuss the use of *DIBELS AD* with teachers and explain how it fits into the overall plan for evaluating instruction. Most typically, this step will be carried out by a school-level administrator (i.e., principal).
2. Keep test materials and the data entry process secure (i.e., teachers should not have access to the test forms prior to the testing).
3. Coordinate the implementation and the assessment process, including ensuring that assessors are trained to administer *DIBELS AD* with fidelity. Ensure students are not tested by their own teacher. Teachers may participate in end-of-year benchmark data collection with *DIBELS AD* by testing any students other than their own. For suggestions regarding who may conduct the assessment, and directions on training assessors, please consult the *DIBELS AD Use Manual*.
4. Conduct *DIBELS AD* testing within a two- to three-week window during the school's regularly scheduled time for end-of-year *DIBELS Next* benchmark testing.
5. Monitor the fidelity and accuracy of the assessment.
6. Ensure data is entered securely into a system that supports *DIBELS AD*. For 2014–2015, the systems that support *DIBELS AD* are *DIBELSnet*® (https://dibels.net/) by DMG and mCLASS® by Amplify® (http://amplify.com/). *DIBELS AD* data should be entered in the same manner you typically would enter your end-of-year *DIBELS Next* benchmark data. Teachers should not enter their own students' *DIBELS AD* data.
7. Make reports and interpretation guidance available to appropriate staff and support them to use the *DIBELS AD* data appropriately.

How Is Student Reading Progress Measured with *DIBELS AD*?

Student reading progress is examined using a tool called *Pathways of Progress*™. *Pathways of Progress* provides an evaluation of progress over time, compared to other students with the same level of initial skills. It examines all students with the same beginning-of-year *DIBELS* Composite Score, and compares their progress over the course of the year to determine if their progress is Well Above Typical, Above Typical, Typical, Below Typical, or Well Below Typical.

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Pathway Descriptor	Pathway Number	Progress Descriptor	Progress Percentile Range
★★★★★	5	WELL ABOVE TYPICAL	80th percentile and above
★★★★☆	4	ABOVE TYPICAL	60th to 79th percentile
★★★☆☆	3	TYPICAL	40th to 59th percentile
★★☆☆☆	2	BELOW TYPICAL	20th to 39th percentile
★☆☆☆☆	1	WELL BELOW TYPICAL	Below 20th percentile

Because each student's progress is determined by comparing that student only to others with the same initial skill level, teachers are not penalized for having students with very low initial skills. Similarly, students who start the year above the benchmark will not give teachers an unfair advantage because their progress is compared to other students who started the year with the same high scores.

Pathways of Progress allows teachers to use a normative context, in addition to the benchmark goals, when setting goals and evaluating progress. A goal-setting utility is available in *DIBELSnet*® to help teachers understand the amount of progress that each student must make to achieve each of the Pathway descriptors. Setting goals is an important first step in monitoring a student's progress throughout the year and making adjustments to instruction as needed (e.g., when a student is not on track to reach the goal). Monitoring progress is particularly important for students who need additional instructional support to achieve benchmark goals.

How Does *DIBELS AD* Inform Evaluation Decisions?

DIBELS AD reports, which are available to administrators at the end of the year, are based on the *Pathways of Progress* analysis described above. The *DIBELS AD* report shows the percent of students in each classroom that are making Typical Progress or better (i.e., the number of students on Pathways 3, 4, or 5). These data are then compared to data from other classrooms across the country at the same grade level to determine each classroom's overall classroom reading progress. On the *DIBELS AD* report, classrooms are given one of five classroom reading progress descriptors based on their percentile rank[1]:

Classroom Reading Progress Descriptor	Classroom Reading Progress Percentile
Well Above Average Classroom Reading Progress	96th to 99th and above
Above Average Classroom Reading Progress	76th to 95th
Average Classroom Reading Progress	25th to 75th
Below Average Classroom Reading Progress	5th to 24th
Well Below Average Classroom Reading Progress	below 1st to 4th

[1]These are the default criteria. Modified criteria can be requested by state departments of education if their expectations and criteria are different.

How Should *DIBELS AD* Data Be Used?

DIBELS AD provides a useful tool that can be used as one component of a comprehensive teacher evaluation process. The information from *DIBELS AD* should be used in conjunction with other methods of evaluating teacher performance such as observation, records review, and data on growth in other academic skill areas. Administrators are encouraged to use *DIBELS AD* reports to help identify areas of strength, as well as areas that need additional support to improve future outcomes.

Data from the reports should be shared with teachers individually and accompanied with or closely followed by a meeting with the principal. Key talking points for principals to use in their discussions of the data from *DIBELS AD* Reports with teachers are:

- This information is a tool for discussion regarding the progress of students with respect to their overall reading proficiency and what may have contributed to their progress (or lack thereof).
- This is one piece of information with respect to decisions around teacher effectiveness. Other information will be considered. See the list of important considerations noted in the *DIBELS AD* Use Manual, as well as the factors noted at the top of the *DIBELS AD* Report (i.e., teacher-related, student-related, system-related factors, as well as home and community factors).
- Although students' progress is considered for their teacher of record in the context of the *DIBELS AD* Reports, many personnel are involved in each student's education and are responsible for the student's progress. Importantly, no system of evaluation can completely isolate a teacher's impact on a student's test scores.
- These data will be used to guide and inform the support provided to teachers and students.
- This is a new paradigm with respect to accountability; teacher effectiveness is now being judged in part by student progress. This process may be quite different from how effectiveness has been determined previously.

Additional information about *DIBELS AD* can be found in the
DIBELS for Accountability Decisions Use Manual and Guidance for Implementation.